

TRADE ACT CUSTOMER QUICK REFERENCE

This guide provides a brief summary of the benefits available under the Trade Act of 2002 and your responsibilities when filing for these benefits. Contact your local Office of Employment and Training or One-Stop Career Center for specific individual information and program requirements.

Petition and Certification for Trade Act Programs and Services

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA) are available to individuals laid off from employers certified by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) as directly affected by increased imports or certain shifts of production to other countries that have a free trade agreement with the United States or party to other trade act agreements. A petition may be filed by any of the following: three workers, a company official, a union official, or a One-Stop operator or partner. Petitions are available at the local One-Stop Career Center or may be downloaded from the DOL website at <http://www.doleta.gov/tradeact/petitions.cfm#2>.

The DOL investigates the petition and issues a determination to either certify or deny eligibility to apply for TAA and ATAA services and benefits. DOL notifies the petitioner, a company official and the State Trade Coordinator of the decision. Affected workers who meet the qualifying requirements may receive reemployment services, training services, job search allowances, relocation allowances, monthly cash benefits, or wage supplements through participation in Trade Act programs including Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC), Kentucky Bridge Grant, and Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA).

An individual worker must meet eligibility requirements including timely application for benefits and services.

TRA (Trade Readjustment Assistance) refers to weekly cash benefits payable under the Trade Act. To qualify for TRA, you must have worked for the trade-affected employer at least 26 weeks at wages of \$30 or more per week during the 52-week period ending with the week of your total job separation. TRA benefits are paid only after your UI benefits are exhausted.

To receive TRA benefits you must qualify for ONE of the following three options:

1. Make at least three job contacts each week and report the contacts to the WES TRA Coordinator, following instructions provided, using a "Work Search Record and Claim Card" every two weeks; or
2. Enroll (and continue satisfactory participation) in TAA approved training within the eight weeks after certification or 16 weeks after the last qualifying separation; or
3. Be granted a waiver of training enrollment by the WES. You must report to the local Office of Employment and Training for a review and renewal of the waiver every 30 days.

TRA benefits include:

a) Basic Entitlement: If you qualify for TRA after you exhaust all rights to regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) you may be eligible for up to 26 weeks of basic TRA benefits.

b) Additional TRA: If you make a timely initial application for training (within 210 days from separation date or certification date, whichever is later), and approved training extends beyond your basic entitlement, you may be eligible to file for additional TRA benefits during an additional 52-week filing period.

(Important Note: Continued eligibility to receive Additional TRA benefits is contingent upon your satisfactory progress in all parts of your approved TAA training. It is your responsibility to notify your LWIA case manager to request approval prior to any change in your training plan. Failure to begin or complete participation in training without justifiable cause may result in denial or discontinuance of TRA and other TAA benefits. Justifiable cause includes reasons beyond an individual's control. Scheduled school breaks of 30 days or less will not affect your TRA weekly benefits. Benefits cannot be paid for breaks longer than 30 days.)

c) Extended TRA: If remedial education is approved in your training program, you may be eligible for up to 26 weeks of extended TRA.

Training Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Training

Workers may be eligible to receive payment for training costs in occupational skills training or remedial education that meet the conditions of TAA approval. A worker will make every reasonable effort to secure suitable employment and comply with requirements including career counseling, testing, placement and supportive services as appropriate to assist in rapid suitable reemployment. The worker must be qualified and able to complete the training within 104 weeks. The application for training must be made prior to enrollment in training.

Job Search Allowance

A job search allowance may be approved to assist a worker obtain employment outside the commuting area if it is determined that the worker has no reasonable expectation of securing suitable employment within the commuting area. The amount of a job search allowance shall be 90% of the total costs of allowable transportation and subsistence items including travel, lodging and meals. An application for job search allowance must be submitted before the job search begins.

Relocation Allowance

A relocation allowance may be approved to help a worker and the worker's family to relocate within the United States under certain circumstances. If it is determined that suitable employment is not available for the worker within the commuting area, and the worker has obtained suitable employment outside the commuting area, the worker may receive 90% of the travel and moving expenses and a lump sum payment, equal to 3 times the individual's average weekly wage, not to exceed \$1,200. The worker must apply for the relocation allowance before the relocation begins.

Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) and KY-Bridge Grant Assistance

The Trade Act provides for a federal tax credit of 65% of the health plan premium for TAA/ATAA eligible individuals enrolled in qualified health plans. To qualify for the credit affected workers must be receiving TRA or be eligible to receive TRA except that their unemployment insurance (UI) benefits have not yet exhausted, or be receiving ATAA benefits, and must be participating in a qualified health plan. Kentucky offers a Bridge Grant to assist individuals who are eligible, and are in the enrollment process for HCTC. Workers complete only one enrollment form, which is used to determine eligibility for both the State and federal programs. For information on enrolling in the HCTC and Kentucky's Bridge Grant, please call the KY Trade Unit at 502-564-7456.

Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA)

ATAA is designed to allow eligible workers for whom retraining may not be appropriate and who obtain reemployment within 26 weeks of separation from adversely affected employment to receive a wage subsidy of up to half the difference between their old and new employment. Workers must be at least 50 years of age at the time of qualifying reemployment. This program is effective for petitions filed on or after August 6, 2003 that are ATAA certified.